CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A web access mechanism embedded in a device, comprising:

web server that generates a device web page wherein the device web page provides a set of user interface functions for the device;

network interface that enables access to the device web page by a web browser such that a user of the web browser accesses the user interface functions for the device through the device web page.

2. The web access mechanism of claim 1, wherein the web server receives an HTTP command via the network interface and then generates an HTML file that defines the device web page in response to the HTTP command.

3. The web access mechanism of claim 2, wherein the HTTP command specifies a URL corresponding to the device.

4. The web access mechanism of claim 3, wherein the HTML file contains a set of information pertaining to the device.

5. The web access mechanism of claim 3, wherein the HTML file contains a set of URLs that control a set of predetermined functions for the device wherein each URL may point to a web page located internal to the device or a web page located external to the device.

6. The web access mechanism of claim 3, wherein the HTML file contains a hyperlink to an external web page that specifies additional information pertaining to the device.

7. A device, comprising:

processor that generates a device web page wherein the device web page provides a set of user interface functions for the device and includes a set of information pertaining to the device;

memory for storing the device web page;

input/output circuitry that enables communication via a communication path such that a web browser accesses the device web page via the communication path.

8. The device of claim 7, wherein the processor receives an HTTP command via the input/output circuitry and then generates an HTML file that defines the device web page in response to the HTTP command.

9. The device of claim 8, wherein the HTTP command specifies a URL corresponding to the device.

10. The device of claim 8, wherein the HTML file contains a set of URLs that control a set of predetermined functions for the device wherein each URL may point to a web page located internal to the device or a web page located external to the device.

11. The device of claim 8, wherein the HTML file defines a set of graphical mechanisms for controlling a set of predetermined functions for the device.

12. The device of claim 8, wherein the HTML file contains a hyperlink to an external web page that specifies additional information pertaining to the device.

13. A user interface method for a device, comprising the steps of:

generating a device web page within the device wherein the device web page provides a set of user interface functions for the device;

providing access to the device web page from a web browser external to the device such that a user of the web browser accesses the user interface functions for the device through the device web page.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of generating a device web page includes the step of generating an HTML file that defines the device web page in response to an HTTP command received from the web browser.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the HTTP command specifies a URL corresponding to the device.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the HTML file contains a set of information pertaining to the device.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the HTML file contains a set of URLs that control a set of predetermined functions for the device wherein each URL may point to a web page located internal to the device or a web page located external to the device.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the HTML file contains a hyperlink to an external web page that specifies additional information pertaining to the device.

19. A user interface apparatus embedded in a device, comprising:

means for generating a device web page within the device wherein the device web page provides a set of user interface functions for the device;

means for providing access to the device web page from a web browser external to the device such that a user of the web browser accesses the user interface functions for the device through the device web page.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the means for generating a device web page includes means for generating an HTML file that defines the device web page in response to an HTTP command generated by the web browser.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the HTTP command specifies a URL corresponding to the device.

22. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the HTML file contains a set of information pertaining to the device.

23. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the HTML file contains a set of URLs that control a set of predetermined functions for the device wherein each URL may point to a web page located internal to the device or a web page located external to the device.

24. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the HTML file contains a hyperlink to an external web page that specifies additional information pertaining to the device.

25. A system, comprising:

device having an embedded web server that generates a device web page wherein the device web page provides a set of user interface functions for the device and includes a set of information pertaining to the device, the device also having a network interface that enables access to the device web page via a communication network;

web browser coupled to the communication network wherein a user of the web browser accesses the user interface functions for the device through the device web page.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the web server in the device receives an HTTP command via the communication network and the network interface and then generates an HTML file that defines the device web page in response to the HTTP command.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the HTTP command specifies a URL corresponding to the device.

28. The system of claim 26, wherein the HTML file contains a set of URLs that control a set of predetermined functions for the device such that the user of the web browser selects the URLs to control the predetermined functions of the device wherein each URL may point to a web page located internal to the device or a web page located external to the device.

29. The system of claim 26, wherein the HTML file contains a hyperlink to an external web page located elsewhere on the communication network that specifies additional information pertaining to the device.

30. The system of claim 25, wherein the communication network comprises a home-based communication network.

31. The system of claim 25, wherein the communication network comprises a large-organization communication network.

32. The system of claim 25, wherein the communication network comprises the world wide web of the Internet.